



# HOLY CROSS TRACTS

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## "I Will Offer the Eucharist for You."

By

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**R**ECENTLY a very earnest and much puzzled young Church woman said to me, "Father, what is all this business of offering the Holy Eucharist 'with special intention' for persons and things? Can't we offer at least our Eucharistic worship without spoiling it by begging God for something through it? We do plenty of begging in our private prayers, and it seems to me that's the place for it. Please explain."

Because there may be many others to whom this idea of offering the Eucharist with special intention is new or strange, let's investigate the meaning of it.

The Holy Eucharist is like a great jewel having many facets, each sparkling and glowing with its own special wonder and brilliance. It is first of all an act of praise, adoration, worship . . . the most perfect we can offer to God because it is

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our Lord's own act and He lets us share in it. It is, again, the supreme act of thanksgiving to Almighty God for Himself and for all His blessings bestowed upon us and all men. (The word "Eucharist" comes from the Greek and means thanksgiving.) And yet again, the Eucharist is our great God-given means of communion and union with Himself: we are fed with the Divine Life when we receive Christ's precious Body and Blood in our Communion, and are made one with Him. But the wonderful glowing heart of the jewel lies here: It is the Great Sacrifice of our Lord offered on the Cross for the salvation of the whole world! A little deeper consideration of this sacrificial aspect of the Eucharist will bring out the answer to our friend's question.

On the Cross of Calvary that first Good Friday Jesus offered Himself to God the Father to be the full, perfect, and sufficient Sacrifice, Oblation, and Satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. That Sacrifice was made once and for all on that Cross. As our Great High Priest in heaven, Jesus is continually offering, pleading that Sacrifice before the Father for us all. It is the work of His sacred Humanity now, there at the right hand of the Father.

On the night before He died, Jesus left us a wonderful way in which we can share in His offering of His Sacrifice to the Father, a way in which we can participate in His Great work of salvation. He gathered His Apostles together for a Last Supper. At that meal He instituted the

Great Sacrament we call the Holy Eucharist. He said to them, "DO THIS." They began immediately after Pentecost to "do this," and the Church has continued to "do this" as its chief act of worship ever since. We "do this" at every Eucharist we offer.

At each Celebration we offer again to the Father the Sacrifice Christ offered on the Cross. What Jesus did at Calvary we re-present to God the Father. We offer again and again the Great Victim, His Body broken and Blood outpoured for the world . . . though no longer as a bloody sacrifice. (Jesus is not destroyed again in the Eucharist.) It is now a sacrificial memorial of the precious Body and Blood offered to the Father . . . that Sacrifice so freely given on Calvary by the saving Christ. Jesus is continually offering It to His Father in Heaven. In the Eucharist we on earth have our share in what is going on in Heaven.

Jesus offered and continues to offer His Sacrifice of Himself for one purpose: the salvation of the whole world, and of every individual human soul. The merits He won for mankind on Calvary are limitless. He has won for us far more grace than will ever be needed for the salvation of every soul who has ever lived or ever shall live. All grace flows from His Cross. We, in our turn, offer His Great Sacrifice in every Eucharist for the salvation of the whole world and of every individual human soul. And it is our wonderful privilege to offer It with special intention for any

particular soul whose special need is known to us. In doing so, we are asking that the merits won by Christ on Calvary, as they are to be bestowed through this particular Eucharist, may be applied to that soul; that the special graces needed by that soul may be supplied to it by our Lord. For example, we may offer the Great Sacrifice with special intention for Aunt Sarah for comfort in her bereavement; for William in critical illness; for conversion for Everett; for Charles who is being ordained Priest today; etc. We may offer It also for special things, events, activities, etc., as when we offer the Eucharist for God's blessing upon the life and work of the Order of the Holy Cross; for the peace of the world; for the Missions of the Church. We may offer It for the repose of the souls of the faithful departed; ordinarily this is done through a Requiem, although one may offer any Eucharist with this intention.

Is it not clear from the foregoing, then, that the greatest possible act of love you can perform for any person is to offer the Great Sacrifice of the Eucharist with special intention for that person in his need? You are pleading Christ's perfect Sacrifice in his behalf . . . the one perfect thing you can do on earth! Not until the last day will it be known to you how great the blessings you called down upon him . . . blessings he otherwise would not have had.

Now . . . a few practical helps. Set the intention with which you plan to offer the Eucharist on the night before as part of your regular prep-



aration. Have one intention or as many as you wish. (My Bishop says the more the better!) Here is a simple prayer for directing your intention:

O God, who makest the unworthy worthy, the unclean clean, and sinners to be holy, cleanse my heart and soul from all stain of sin, that I may worthily assist at Thy holy Altar; and grant that the Sacrifice to be here offered may be acceptable to Thee. I intend to offer It in union with Thy One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church

As an Act of Adoration;

As a thanksgiving for all Thy mercies;

As a sin-offering for all my sins and offenses;

As an Act of Supplication

—for the salvation of all men,

—for Thy whole Church,

—for my family and friends,

—for the faithful departed,

—for all sick and suffering,

—for the dying,

—and especially for (*here list your special intentions*),

—and for myself, that I may grow in virtue and obtain the rewards of Thy Kingdom. Amen.

(Adapted from *Roodcroft Book of Prayers*)

Make it a point to be in Church at least five minutes before the Service begins. Kneel down and say:

- a. In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.
- b. Your regular prayers and immediate preparation for this Eucharist.

- c. Repeat the above prayer for directing your intention.

There are various ways of recalling your special intention during the Service. Do it in any way most comfortable for you. You can renew it consciously at the Offertory. You can take it with you as you go up to the Altar Rail to receive (or have it in mind as you make your Spiritual Communion in your pew, if you are not receiving sacramentally at this Eucharist).

After the Celebration is over, as you linger to make your thanksgiving, make it a point to thank God for the wonderful blessings He has bestowed, unknown to you, upon those for whom you have just offered the Sacrifice.

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